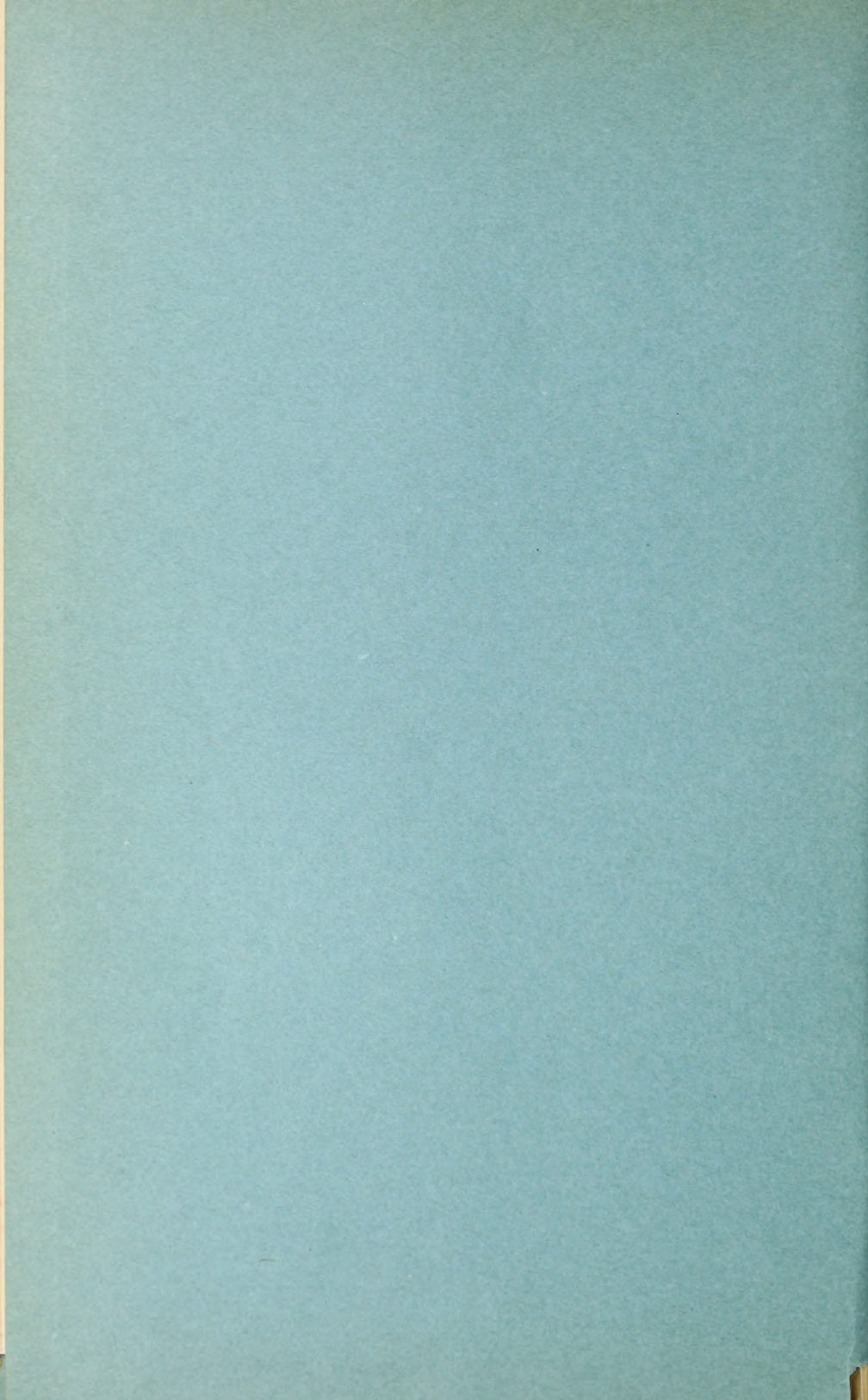


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Contribution from the Bureau of Plant Industry,
Forage-Crop Investigations,
WM. A. TAYLOR, Chief.

PERENNIAL RYE-GRASS (*Lolium perenne*).

Perennial rye-grass is a tufted short-lived perennial which makes a fair crop of hay and is especially valuable in pastures. It should not be confused with the wild ryes because of the similarity of the common names. It has been known variously as ray-grass, darnel, and Randall grass. Perennial rye-grass grows usually to a height of from 1 to 2 feet. There are an abundance of long, narrow leaves near the base of the plant, but the seed stems are inclined to be naked. The under surface of the leaves is bright and glossy, which gives an attractive appearance to the grass, most noticeable early in the spring. It has been a popular grass in England for at least three centuries and was early introduced into America.

VALUE.

While valuable, Perennial rye-grass takes a very subordinate position when compared with timothy as a hay plant. The chief use which has been and should be made of this grass is as an ingredient in permanent pasture mixtures and for lawn purposes. It can be used for an annual hay crop if desired.

SEED.

The seed of Perennial rye-grass generally has been imported into this country, the price usually being too low to encourage American farmers to save it. The germination of the seed is usually good, and the seedlings are especially vigorous. No one of the common grasses excels it in this respect. The seed weighs about 24 pounds to the bushel.

USES.

The chief uses to which Perennial rye-grass should be put are as an ingredient in pasture mixtures, as a temporary covering to prevent the washing of the soil, for lawns, and for winter grazing on Bermuda-grass pastures in the South. The grass is valuable for

these purposes because of its rapid germination and growth. It should be looked upon as a temporary covering while more permanent and valuable plants are becoming established.

SOILS AND CLIMATE.

For the best results this grass should have a fertile, moist soil with a cool, damp climate. Hot, dry spells usually kill it on uplands, or at least greatly retard its growth. Its lack of drought resistance greatly restricts its usefulness in this country.

CULTURE.

The seed bed for Perennial rye-grass should be prepared as for other grasses. A fine, mellow surface on a compact subsoil gives the best results. It should be seeded early in the spring or in late summer or early fall. It does especially well when seeded in the fall. Its ability to grow off rapidly allows the plants to become well established before hard freezing occurs. When seeded alone, from 25 to 30 pounds of seed to the acre are required to give a good stand, while 8 to 10 pounds are sufficient for seeding in mixtures with other grasses.

LYMAN CARRIER,
Agronomist.

WASHINGTON, D. C., *May 31, 1919.*

